FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

Volume XXIV, Number 5, October 1973

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880-1956)

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Our Purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

EDITORIAL

SUFFERINGS THAT SEPARATE US

IT'S hard to figure out why people go on suffering once they have had the experience of harmony with the higher power. I don't know why I do. I keep asking myself why. . . .

The large crises often do not cause us as much suffering as the smaller ones, for the simple reason, I suppose, that we expect them, know they're inevitable and that our acceptance of them is required. A death is too big a reality for us to escape. And pains and infections and other bodily ailments also insist upon themselves so that we have to accept them too. Moreover, society provides etiquettes and deceptions for such emergencies as well as skilled professionals to assist us through them. One important alleviation available to us is the presence of others on these occasions—visitors to our sickbeds, fellow-mourners at the funerals of our loved ones. The feeling that our losses and torments are being shared is the most effective anodyne.

My impression is that we suffer the most as a result of efforts to escape reality—that, instead of reality, we deliberately pick ways-out that in the long run prove more painful than any reality possibly could, with the worst result of all being our separation from others and from what we know to be the truth, in other words, God.

We seem to pick our ways-out according to the weakest spots in our natures. For me, and, I think, for a lot of men, the weakest spot is my ego, my picture of myself as I fondly believe I am—what would be termed my "image" if I were a politician. Ordinarily my ego is manageable. Once it has been flouted by someone else's ego or meanness or thoughtlessness, however, it is likely to want to assert itself in no uncertain terms—it is likely to go on a rampage. At times like these—which grow less frequent as I grow older—I am prone to visions of myself as either the outcast or martyr (in both cases, though, the star and hero) fighting the world—no, the universe—for the rights of which I have been most cruelly and of course completely unjustifiably robbed. When I am suffering this indignation of mine which is always righteous, I find myself in feeling and fact wholly alone. I am alone because my concern is solely with myself. This is true of the loneliness that follows all other ways-out. . . .

For others there is worry, which seems to be able to offer them just as much misery and suffering and isolation as my sore ego does me. A worrier manages to escape reality very well indeed because if ever any substitute for it was so patently fake and unnecessary to life, I don't know what it is (unless it's my image). Not being one, I do not understand worriers. They strike me as slightly mad as I watch the unreal anxiety take hold of them until it blooms as big as suns inside their heads. They live alone, too, in their endless agitation about one thing today and another thing tomorrow. Their concern is also selfish.

I can go on and on emunerating the sufferings we choose instead of God. Putting aside such obvious ways-out as alcoholism and the taking of drugs, let me just list a few that come to mind: hypochondria, frivolity (I am thinking of those tiresome people who take the entertainments of this world as seriously as God Himself), sex, miserliness, snobbery, intolerance, and conviction of the superiority of oneself or one's group or both —which brings us back to where we began, my touchy ego.

You may be surprised that I regard these traits as sufferings. Most of them used to be thought of as sins, most of them as unforgivable. But they seem like sufferings after we have re-

(Continued on page 36)

Photo taken in the Fellowship office in the summer of 1963.

ANNA GRACE SAWYER (1878 - 1973)

After a long and useful life, Anna Grace Sawyer passed away on May 15 in Evanston, Illinois. She was born on February 20, 1878, of ancestry dating back to John and Priscilla Alden of the Mayflower. In early years she and her family lived in a sod house in Nebraska, then moved to Forest Park, Illinois, where her father was a wholesale florist. After finishing her education, Miss Sawyer owned and operated a florist shop in Forest Park for twenty-five years, retiring in 1929. She was an active member of Calvary Presbyterian Church and was deeply interested in international relations. In 1952, she was introduced to Fellowship in Prayer and immediately became enthusiastically interested. She was credited with distributing more copies of this publication and bringing in more friends and subscribers than any other person at the time. In 1953, she wrote: "The friends to whom I have given copies of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER seem interested to know about this outreach of a spiritual bond as a help to realize we have in common with all religious groups a yearning to seek guidance from God our Creator... and this can give us a comradeship, a fellowship in prayer. This could also help in the world's desperate need for understanding, for reconciliation, for negotiation toward peace on earth." The Executive Secretary was a guest in Miss Sawyer's home on a number of occasions. She was an invaluable member of the Fellowship in so many ways. Anna Grace Sawyer spent much of her life for the betterment of the world. —K.G.B.

EVERY ROAD A TRAIL OF BEAUTY

Jewell Kirby Fitzhugh

AT THIS "color up time" of the year, when October skies are cerulean blue, thousands of tourists are following scenic trails throughout the nation. They are, I am sure, amply rewarded.

Some of us, though, are stay-at-homes or for one reason or another can't take a trip very far from home. No matter. There is beauty where we are. Wherever I turn there is a panorama of color. The scarlet of the maple vies with that of the dogwood and the darker red of the blackgum, while the yellow of hickory, box elder, and elm mingles with the green and russet of the oaks. Every road is a scenic trail. Beside every path is a burning bush.

"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet," said the Angel of the Lord to Moses, "for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

I, too, feel like bowing in awe and reverence when every bush is aflame with glory and every tree proclaims the wonder of creation. I have this moment to drink in all this loveliness, this moment to give thanks for every perfect gift "that cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

In the late afternoon I take a stroll down a shady lane. In places the trees touch overhead from either side, making an archway of red and green and gold. I turn to pluck some branches bearing red berries. I break a sassafras twig to sniff its fragrance. Recalling a gesture of childhood, I touch my tongue to the cluster of almost dry, reddish-brown sumac berries in order to taste their brackish tang. Two bluebirds swoop down in front of me. The clouds in the west are edged with the gold of the sunset. There is pleasantness at every turn. This is my trail of beauty and meditation and prayer. There is a healing power that restores my soul and deepens my compassion for sorrowing and suffering humanity.

On a perfect October afternoon, a sister and I drive down the historic Wire Road for a few miles and then branch off on a by-road to visit one of our mother's girlhood friends, Miss Lulu Floyd, who, for all her seventy-odd years, is as active and spry as you please.

After an hour or more of chatting we are preparing to leave, when Lou, as we affectionately call her, remembers that she hasn't given us any of the fine purple eggplants from her garden. Eggplant being one of my favorite vegetables, I am happy to prolong our visit. Lou's face beams as she says, "We can have more talk as we walk to the garden."

Beside the winding path the delicate pink lady-finger-like flowers of the smartweed are spread in confusion. I pick a handful to add to my fall bouquet. Thus the path to Miss Lou's garden becomes a trail of friendliness and beauty.

On another day I drive down the long road in the early morning. Standing alone in a low place at the edge of a meadow is the largest and most symmetrical blackgum tree I have ever seen. It is resplendent in red and gold against the sky, against the morning sun. Its loveliness is so breathtaking that I stop the car to let the beauty sink into my being. Believing with Wordsworth that nature is "the reflection of the living God," I look upon His handiwork in wonder and reverence.

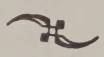
Coming to a turn in the road, I see Adams Mountain to my left. Never have the trees looked more brilliant. All the colors are there—shades of mauve and amber and gold, scarlet and crimson and russet.

Nearer home, I stop on the crest of a ridge to look down upon the valley and across to the mountain beyond, which is wrapped in the soft haze of Indian summer. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills...my help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

In the cool of a late afternoon, I take a walk through the pasture, following a trail made by cows. I expect no adventure, merely a quiet hour of discovery, meditation, and enjoyment. I walk around the pond, coming on a clump of sweetgum trees clothed in multiple shades of pink, green, scarlet, russet, deep

purple, and gold. Nearby are three blackgum trees, scarlet silhouettes against the evening sky.

On the way to the house, I stop to pick some tiny lavender asters, a few magenta-colored spikes of French mulberries, and some grass that looks like miniature cat-tails. Beside a brook there are vivid cardinal flowers. These I refrain from picking because they are rare, but it gives me joy to see them. I gather a few branches bearing pink berries from the buck bushes along an old fence row. More beauty for my fall bouquet. No adventure. Just shining bits of happiness and quiet communion with my Lord.



PRAYER IN THANKS

Jack Bobo (Eighteen years old)

My Father in Heaven,
I do not come to You now asking help in an endeavor
or aid with a problem,
Or begging Your forgiveness for a sin.
I speak to You in thanks, for You have done much for me.
Thank You, God, for giving me a sound mind to think with
And a body worthy of athletic competition;
I am grateful to You for giving me wonderful friends.
I ask You for wisdom and thirst for knowledge in the years
ahead.
Thank You also, Lord, for being near me, and making me
unafraid of Death.
Please make me more aware and appreciative of those
around me,
And, lastly, God, thank You for bestowing upon me
the gift of Love,
For that is what Life is all about.

(Courtesy of Nina Andrews)

GROUNDED

Phyllis B. Crockett

Like the poor Kiwi,
I am wingless,
Grounded,
Forced to plod—
Yet, my spirit yearns
To soar with God.

THE NEED TO SHARE

Catherine Cabeen Houck

BREAD. What an interesting word this is, with its many meanings. Consider its shape, its texture, its taste, and you may easily know from what country it originally came. Cellophane-wrapped, it loses its personality and cannot be compared with the crusty, yeasty loaf from pioneer kitchens. The flat round loaf, the short high loaf, the long thin loaf sticking out from a bicycle basket are all familiar food to some native son or another. Its ingredients vary as much as its shapes. There are dark wheat and rye breads, finely textured white ones, others sprinkled with poppy or sesame seeds, each with its own admirers. But bread was meant to be more than interesting. Its purpose is to nourish or satisfy the body's needs. Only with its breaking can it become useful.

WATER. How cool and sparkling in a glass pitcher! How delightful-looking in a silver container beaded with droplets! How tantalizing in an earthen jug! But water was created not to be these things but thirst-quenching, life-reviving, and necessary. Without its pouring it serves no purpose.

A THANKSGIVING STORY

ABOUT DURER'S 'PRAYING HANDS'

THANKSGIVING DAY was almost over for the Johnson family. The guests had gone, the house had settled down to a contented quiet. Even the burning logs upon the hearth seemed to know that no further blaze of brightness was expected of them that day, and with a low warm sigh turned into glowing embers with only a few tiny flames dancing.

The youngsters lay stretched out in front of the fire. No longer were they tempted by the dish of nuts, the bowl of fruit, the box of mints, the bowl of freshly-made popcorn. The dog, usually so frisky, stretched himself full-length and closed his yes.

"And now for our story, Mom," Joan said.

For years it had been part of the family tradition to read or tell a story at the end of each Thanksgiving Day—a story of some great gratitude, of another Thanksgiving, somewhere, sometime. Often it was the story of the first Thanksgiving, the Pilgrims, their feast of gratitude, and the Indians. Another time it was the story of Noah and his wife and children, and the birds and the beasts, all saved from the flood.

"What's the story tonight?" Jimmy asked.

Father reached over and dimmed the lamp so that light from the fire filled the room with flickering shadows.

"It's the story of a pair of work-worn hands, the praying hands," Mother began, "the story of a famous drawing and why the artist came to draw it—a picture of gratitude for the sacrifice of a loyal friend. This is the story of Albrecht Durer —"

He was born into a poor Hungarian family, the second of eighteen children. His father was an engraver whose income barely met the needs of his large family. There was no money for art lessons for the talented boy. Albrecht left home at an early age,

hoping to earn his own living and enough extra to study art. But the going was very hard.

On his travels he met an older man, Gustav, whose ambition, too, was to become a great artist. They decided to cast their lots together, sharing a room, earning where and when and how they could, working at drawing and painting between times.

It was not long before Gustav saw that it was not working out. Their part-time earnings brought them scarcely enough to live on and neither one was making headway. He suggested to Albrecht another plan.

"I am older than you," he said. "I will work full-time while you study. When your works are selling, I will paint."

Albrecht argued that since he was the younger he should be the one to work. But Gustav would not hear of it. "I have watched our neighbor build barns and things," he said. "I will become a carpenter. I'll be a good carpenter—as good a carpenter as you're an artist!"

"Not for long!" Albert hugged him fervently. "I will skimp on expenses, and I will study hard. I will succeed soon, and then you will study—and you will succeed soon after that!"

So the two men went to work, Albrecht working and studying as a man obsessed, while Gustav labored hard at his chosen trade, earning as much money as he was able so that Albrecht could have the materials he needed for his painting. It was not easy, and the weeks and months passed slowly.

Then one day Albrecht came back to their little room in great excitement. He had made his first sale. It brought enough money to take care of both of them for some time. Now Gustav would be free to take up again the painting that he loved so much.

"You can forget your barns and throw away your carpenter tools now, Gustav. Now you can become an artist, too. Here, take the brush! Feel it! Touch it to the canvas! Paint, Gustav, paint!"

Gustav took the brush—and dropped it. "It's so light!" he exclaimed. He picked it up again. "Light as the feather of an angel wing!" He thrust the brush awkwardly at the canvas, and again it fell from his hand.

"I cannot, Albrecht—just cannot hold it." He looked at

his hands mutely. Albrecht looked at them too, and for the first time he really saw them. The knuckles were large and hard, the palms calloused and yellow, the fingers torn and split.

"I smashed my fingers so often with the hammer when I was learning." Gustav's voice was low, almost apologetic. "A piece of lumber fell across my wrist once—" He turned in fear and fright. "Albrecht! My hands! I have lost the touch!"

As he saw the despair in his friend's eyes, Albrecht's heart grew sick. He turned and hastened from the room, not knowing how to answer the hopeless cry.

Night was descending rapidly over the city when Albrecht returned to the room. He hesitated at the door, for he heard the voice of his friend at prayer. Quietly he looked into the dusk-dimmed garret and saw within a shaft of fading sunset light the man's homely, work-worn hands clasped in prayer. He saw the broken nails, the swollen joints, and he knew his loyal friend would never paint again. He had sacrificed the artistry he had once possessed to give Albrecht Durer his chance.

Intense gratitude surged through Albrecht. Always he would care for his friend. But he would do more than that. He must create a work in tribute to so noble a sacrifice. Swiftly his artist eye took in the reverent attitude of those praying hands, the beauty of service underlying their disfigurements. He would paint those hands, just as they were, wrinkled and worn and lined. Through them the world would know of his friend. It would be his great work of thanksgiving. . . .

Softly, a small red ember fell and settled with the others in the grate.

"Durer's greatest wish," Mother Johnson finished, "was that when people look upon Praying Hands they will remember with true gratitude and humility all hands which work without glory in the service of others."

Another rich Thanksgiving Day was over.

I will be with you, I will not fail you, or abandon you. Be strong and of good courage. Psalm 23.

SPIRITUAL ASTRONAUTS *Michael Toryfter*

The children of God
Use the stars
As stepping-stones
To the universe.

PRAYER — "GO-BEFORE POWER"

Ramond M. Veh

"Prayer is the great go-before power." This is the pungent statement of Dr. Robert G. Lee, famous Southern Baptist Church pastor. It states the undeniable fact that prayer changes things.

Consider the "go-before power" demonstrated in the Bible. Before Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, he prayed. Before Peter received the important vision from the housetop, he prayed. Before Daniel was preserved in the lions' den, he prayed. Before Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, he prayed. Before he went to the cross, he prayed. Before Saul of Tarsus set out to encompass the earth with the Gospel message, he prayed.

Then think of the "go-before power" which history records. Before Columbus and his men ate a mouthful of food on the new continent, they knelt and prayed. The first thing the Huguenots did after they landed in the Carolinas was to pray even before they planted a furrow. Before the Holland refugees laid a corner of a house in New Amsterdam, they prayed. Before the Pilgrim fathers hewed a log, they prayed.

Is not prayer the great "go-before power" for Christian accomplishment? Back of all successful ventures, whatever else there is, is prayer. We do our greatest work by prayer. A world in crisis needs prayers for the solution of its multiple problems. Let us pray.

AVENUES OF PRAYER

Georga Palmer Dishner

THERE are many who believe prayer is the greatest source of power in the world today, who do not know how to pray themselves.

First, may I say, the right condition for the efficacy of prayer is that it must be a true prayer. Some "say" prayers, often just memorized phrases, which is not praying at all. I have a simple definition of prayer. It is "conversation with God," and I do realize it takes more than one to converse. When one really prays, God "talks back" if one is listening, and this is conversation.

God is never so busy with the mechanism of the universe that He cannot listen to the prayers of His children. But He does maintain rules and regulations which we have to observe.

The first rule is that we are to pray without any hypocrisy in our hearts. A person must not be anxious to have an audience. Praying is not merely acting or speaking a part before God, for He sees all pretense. A hypocrite possesses little of what he professes, appearing spotless on the outside but being unclean inwardly. All the eloquent words a hypocrite utters will avail him nothing. God never refuses an earnest request or plea for physical or spiritual help. He answers all real prayers, but in His own way, in His own time—"yes, no, or wait a while."

In prayer, we must remember, we are dealing with God—we cannot deceive Him. Petitions from a hypocritical heart are a sham—dust clouds that bring no rain. We cannot pretend to be in earnest with God when we are occupied by material things.

The second rule is that we are to pray in private. I learned to pray in the wooded area of the mountains of North Carolina, behind a large boulder. I was out of sight and hearing of anyone but God. He admonishes us to get in a closet and close the door on all outside. I have often done that. But somehow, in the

woods, I felt so close to God. No one earthly heard me unless it was a feathered friend. But I know God heard me. We need to be "with" God before we can go into a public place "for" God. We must hide ourselves with God if we wish to undertake to show ourselves for Him.

Don't make the mistake of believing that though you are alone in the closet, you are always in mental privacy with God. Many things—a kitten—can follow you into the closet and occupy your thoughts and crowd out your private transaction with God. It is easy to let the material things of this world sneak in and prevent real conversation with our Creator.

Another "must" in prayer is to pray in simple faith. We find in Hebrews II: 6 God says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him." In Mark 9:23 Jesus says to the father of the demoniac boy, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." In our praying we need to be "not faithless, but believing." Many many times Jesus said to those He had healed, "Go in peace, thy faith hath made thee whole."

We should be definite in our praying. God knows our need before we ask Him, and so, you might say, why ask Him! Our Father loves His children and just as an earthly father desires his children to ask for what they want, He waits for us to make our needs known. Of course, we should realize it would be disastrous if He did answer all our petitions. Personally, I think we should be very careful what we ask for. But if there is a certain aspect that we wish to be taken away, we should be definite in requesting it. Jesus says, "Whatsoever ye desire, pray for them."

And then, we should pray with importunity—with urgency. We should persist in making our entreaties expressive of our need for Him to hear and answer. There are those who believe it is not necessary to pray for the small everyday things of life. I believe God is interested just as much in the trivial frets that we encounter every hour of the day as in the mighty forces that beset us. Often it is the so-called "little things" that we need the most help with. There is where our faith is often tested, for we think we can cope with them without God's help. The main reason God is pleased with importunity comes not from His un-

willingness to bestow upon us our wishes but from the fact that He wants us to be made fit to receive them. He wants us to *ask* —which is making our wishes known to Him—and *seek*—which is promising to do our part—and *knock*—which means that we will persist until the door is opened, pray until we get an answer. We must always keep our inner self open to receive His answer, and not be bitter if He does not answer according to our petition but His will.

I have already touched on submissiveness, but it is a very important issue. We are not always willing that God answer us in His own will and way. However, our Father has superior wisdom. He may determine to answer not exactly as we ask but in a better way. We may always be sure that He knows what is best. So we should rest in calm content that His answer will come—in one way or the other.

If, when we pray, we endeavor to cooperate with His eternal good will, we pray submissively—and break down some of the barriers and obstacles that have been hindering us. Then God sees that we are fit for what He wants to accomplish in us and for us. That is the only way to keep ourselves in tune with the infinite.

Then, of course, we must pray forgivingly and remember that our love for God is sensed in our love for our fellowmen. All envies and jealousies must be thrown out of our hearts when we approach our Father. For some this seems to be the hardest thing to do. These little envious things that sneak up and try to get between us and God must be forced away. When we are able to do that, we will remember that "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good" and our prayers will be "good will to all men."

The last avenue of prayer is "In Jesus' name." John 14: 14 says, "If ye ask anything in My Name, I will do it." The key to this is in that commendation which is the greatest that can be made to any Christian: to "abide in Christ." In his farewell message to His disciples Jesus says to them not less than ten times, "Abide in me." This is the culmination. If we want answers to our prayers, we must live in Him, and He in us. There must be no selfishness on our part.

THE AM-NOTS

Florence DeGroat

THE name of God is I AM. That is Be-ing stating Its awareness of Itself.

As given to Moses, the name of Be-ing was "I Am that I Am." This is Be-ing outpicturing Itself in plurality, particularization, or *individual* consciousness.

Particularization necessarily involves exclusion. So the awakening individual consciousness necessarily cognizes "otherness," or something separate from (and presumably antagonistic to) self. Trying out this concept in multiple experience, the individual gradually learns that its own concepts outpicture in *its* universe, as the Generic word's concepts outpicture in the cosmos. Consequently the individual gradually comes to recognize that the whole is greater than any of its parts and that to hold out for self against the whole creates an inverse spiral which ends in complete imprisonment for the self. Its egocentric activities cannot stand against the universal Reality of Divine (universal) I AM-ness.

At this point of revelation, a magnificent panorama of possibility presents itself for individual attainment. But before we can become a cognizing part of the universal Purpose, we must observe, reject, and *reverse* the galaxy of I-am-not conceptions which we have conceived and consequently radiated in the aeons of our evolvement. By negating God, the other fellow, and the inchoate mass of "otherness" which our self-ness conceived, we have built a prison which obstructs our new and consciously creative concepts.

The physical universe is circular. This is a picture of the experience of Life. Experience is circular. Concepts which we send out return to *us* and *we* experience what we created.

Consequently, to deny God (Good) in *any form* is to build a non-God experience which we ourselves must go through unless we dissolve it by one of the great Truth concepts such as

Universal Love, Universal Truth, or Forgiveness.

How many am-nots have we entertained, consented to, or vehemently declared (and/or resented) in the course of our evolvement? The whole Principle of Passivity (the feminine aspect of God) we have probably thought of as "evil"—that is, as obstructive to our personal will. That "other fellow" we have doubtless consigned to a state of semi am-not-ness (i.e., error), insofar as he did not coincide with our egocentric purposes at the moment. And even our *selves* have at times doubtless come in for a good share of our own am-not petulant thinking.

The am-nots must go. They must *all* be reversed. And rather than to undergo slow cycles of karmic cancelling and undoing, we suggest the great Absolution which Jesus offered and planted in the race-consciousness. Only such a complete outpicturing of Divine Love-Truth as He gave can convince us of the complete I AM-ness of God and of His *totality* in both His alpha and His omega states. Only thus can we ensoul a great enough concept of Forgiveness to dissolve our am-nots all the way back to our Beginning, which is God.

THE SPIRIT WIND

Jaye Giammarino

I cried to God in the black of night
with the wind to carry my plea—
and gently as the breeze in May
petition Him for me. . .

and while I prayed, a spirit wind
appeared quite suddenly,
and with the mighty stir of hope
Dispersed my misery.

TO THE HUNTERS SAFE RETURN

Judy Shepps

Mark the child of silence grown
    Smiling, winking, daring the unknown
Follow your faith, heal the poor
    Scatter incense on my front door
Wipe clean spent illusions of dawn
    Sprinkle incantations of wisdom unborn
Shriek with terror, cry with pain
    But dont ever leave my life again.

TOLD ON A MOUNTAIN

Betty M. Daly

Our One and All
Who dwells within, without, and everywhere,
We hallow your name!

May trust in life be ours.
May earth become heaven!

Supply our needs as they arise.

May we forgive ourselves and others
  that you may then forgive us.

May your light surround us
  dispelling darkness.

All power and glory are forever yours!
    May we realize this.

MY FAITH CONVI NCES ME

Josepha Murray Emms

When night descends upon me at the last,
I cannot vision what my thoughts may be;
Will I perhaps review the distant past
Or try to understand Death's mystery?
Will I go peacefully in trustful grace,
Or will I cling to earth and what I know?
Will I perhaps discern a treasured face
Of some dear loved one from the long ago?
Now Life sti ll glows with comfort and delight,
And that long journey seems so far away.
Will I tread bravely caverns of the night?
Will turquoise skies seem then a somber gray?
My faith convinces me the dark will flee
Before the splendor of Eternity.

VESPERS

(To my Grandmother on her 100th birthday)

Susan Shields

Boats in the evening calm. . . .
Floating into the rocking balm
Of hope on the open sea.
Notes in a quiet soul. . . .
Low in the gloaming the rising intoning
Of psalms as they flow to their quay.

TRUE PRAYER *Helen G. Jefferson*

Prayer does not mean each time we pray
It guarantees us our own way.
True prayer is this—to learn to say,
"Speak, Lord. Thy servant will obey."

BESEECHING THEE

Robert E. Harper

Big Sir, good Sir,
Holiest of all sirs,
Purge our degradation.
Grant us grace again;
Gird our strength to raise
Our minds above our belts.

Big Sir, sweet Sir,
Saint above all sirs,
Wrest our desecration.
Clothe our dreams anew;
Rinse our mouths of evil,
Heal our hearts of hate.

Big Sir, kind sir,
Almighty God, Sir,
Stay our desperation.
Wash our woes away;
Notch our lives with love,
Not with scars of lust.

AN ESOTERIC APPROACH TO SUFISM

K. M. P. Mohamed Cassim

Medical research together with recent explorations of the mind have now confirmed that many of the ills that used to be considered as purely organic in nature are actually caused by our attitude towards life and those around us. Even organic as well as nervous and psychological ills can be caused by hate, fear, jealousy, and anger. Therefore we must make every effort to widen the vision of every human being by discovering divinity in each other, so that rank passions such as hatred, anger, jealousy, and selfishness are set at naught.

When an aspirant begins to observe his mind, he comes face to face with only a few desires and feelings which dance on the surface of his mind. But below the surface there are various kinds of thoughts and desires which exercise considerable influence upon the nature of the mind from behind the scenes. Further, when one makes serious attempts in controlling the grosser desires and feelings which create disturbance, one is surprised to find that many subtle thoughts and desires rise from the deeper layer of the mind and create troubles. The tendency of the mind is simply to drag us down towards the sensual attraction and if we indulge too much in any form of emotional excitement then we are only damaging ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually. We must realize the fact that we are attracted to sensuality because knowingly or unknowingly we derive certain pleasure by dwelling on those sensations.

Since the dangers of conflict of greed for wealth and power have never been so menacing as in this era, it is very essential that we lead a pure spiritual life so that we may cope with the innumerable problems maturely. Release from pain and attainment of absolute happiness is the highest purpose of human life. To understand oneself correctly is a tremendous job, because the self or mind is never the same from moment to moment. It is an obvious fact that life is a struggle not merely with circumstances

and environments but also because our minds are pulled in different directions. If we keenly observe, we will find there are many contradictory desires, compulsions, and urges in our minds. Unless we grasp the totality of the mind, we cannot be free. Right meditation alone can bring the realization of the true character of the self. A seeker must inwardly feel the call of Truth and he must discover the fact that when the true wisdom of Reality is attained, the veil of ignorance disappears. This means that one establishes the right way of living in his own consciousness amidst chaos and confusion.

If we are upset even by trivial affairs, if we lose our character even by a small temptation, if our self control is damaged by outward attraction, then these are an indication that we have deviated from the spiritual life. The deteriorating factor on the spiritual path is the distraction of the mind one feels while in meditation. Practice of meditation makes the mind calm and steady and eminently fit for reflecting the Absolute Reality in its true light. Then the serene flow of divine energy is directed solely Godward. Meditation sharpens the whole being; every pore of being becomes active in divine harmony. When the total mind becomes silence, that supreme silence permeates the whole world which brings spiritual upliftment.

Since every moment of our waking hours is filled with ego-centered activities, we do not know how to live in meditation. Meditation is the way to understand the movement of the mind and not to identify with it. If we understand the mechanistic nature of brain and cerebral activity as a fact, there is no more psychological identification with anything that mind brings up. If we can calmly observe our thoughts, we will reach a state where thoughts are completely eliminated, and after that, the observer remains immersed in blissful silence. This is something which we can really experiment with. . . . Thus meditation is the total silence of mind in action. A spontaneous meditation releases a new and dynamic energy. It refreshes the nervous system and increases the sensitivity of the total being. The state of living in meditation is moving in spiritual freedom. The beauty of meditation gives us a new dimension of divine living.

Meditation is the unfoldment of the totality of our consciousness. Meditation is an experimental science. It is not a speculative game.

The metaphysical science of Sufism explains that the notions of pleasure and pain result only from the contact of the senses with their objects. Since these contacts are connected with bodily existence, they have a beginning and an end and therefore are not permanent. Further, it indicates that the unreal or impermanent is always in a state of flux; change is its very nature. But behind the changing world is the unchanging Reality. The fact is that in order to observe change, there must be something unchangeable. If the subject of the change is also changing, change can not be observed. Sufism insists that the true knowledge of Reality alone can be the sole means for the destruction of ignorance and for deliverance from the illusory bondage and sufferings from which man apparently suffers in this world. Sufism is not a creed or set of dogmas, but a process enabling each man, whatever be his station in life, to grow and develop into a higher state of spiritual perfection.

Sufism insists that until and unless the practical life is fully imbued with love, devotion, and contemplation of the Absolute, one cannot enjoy the beauty of spiritual life. The true goodness of divine life consists in the all-around discipline of the physical body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the emotions, and the heart for the realization of the Absolute Truth. Sufistic philosophy points out that everything except That is changing and only That is eternal and that eternal Reality is the Self of man. Everything else has an impermanent existence only in relation to the Self. The indwelling Self is ever changeless, indestructible, and illimitable.

Sufism declares that the liberating factor is meditative awareness, which means that if we remain simply aware of the pleasurable and painful feelings that arise within ourselves as a result of our contact with the external world, instead of reacting to them with craving or aversion as the case may be, there is the possibility of putting an end to this mental distraction. For this reason only the cultivation of self-awareness oc-

cupies a central place in Sufism and in order to attain the true state of *Fana* the mind must be perfectly pure and transparent, calm and tranquil, absolutely undisturbed. It is only when the self is not that there is *Fana*—the state of being in which alone there can be purity. The state of *Fana* comes only when the self, which is the process of accumulation, ceases to be.

According to the esoteric aspects of Sufism, if a seeker maintains this state of *Fana* for a sufficiently long period, he will experience that his individual consciousness completely unifies with the Supreme Reality. In this state, the subject-object relation vanishes from the mind and no modification of the mind is felt. Then only is the real state of *Baqa* attainable. In the highest state of *Baqa*, the Reality is not experienced as an object, but one becomes one with the Reality and therefore there is no plurality or process of dualistic knowledge. The unconditioned state of *Baqa* is a Supreme Consciousness in which there is no difference between the knower and the knowable. A Sufi is an integrated total man with a mind set free. A Sufi is he who has passed through various spiritual disciplines and attained the frame of mind which does not react to any condition or circumstance of life. A Sufi is not one who has retired from worldly life and lives away from the strife and turmoil of the world. A Sufi finds perfect inward peace and bliss in the midst of all the bewildering diversities of the world.

Sufism insists on understanding the fact that man suffers because of his false identification with an illusory separate self. His attachment to this fictitious entity, the 'me,' is a result of distorted dualistic partial perceptions and conditioned responses. Although to keep the mind quiet is one of the most difficult things to achieve, it is very necessary that one should cultivate the habit of maintaining the mind in a state of perfect peace. When the total mind becomes 'silence' then only can one develop the utter detachment which brings freedom from all the worries and sufferings connected with worldly events. Needless to say, the cessation of mental activity does not result in withdrawing from the active world and does not result in the benumbing of one's capacities. The fulfillment of life at all levels is the aim of Sufism.

LIFE IN DEATH

Marion H. Freeman

Close your eyes
sweet lady

breathe gently
whi le I clasp
your hand
in mine

glory surrounds
you as you slip
from earths garment
into your heavenly
robe

weightless in form
you rise hover
release the last
breath se e there
is no veil

and your eyes are
opened

INSOMNIAC *William Walter De Bolt*

Conscience lies awake
like King Ahasuerus
after passions sleep.

We thank Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. —Book of Common Prayer.

MEDITATION BASED ON PSALM 54

Samuel M. Silver

A BANKER told a housewife over the telephone that her account was overdrawn by thirty-five dollars. "Don't worry about it," she said, "I'll send you a check in the morning."

What sounds foolish in financial terms is exactly what many of us do in spiritual terms. We fail to replenish our moral reserves and then we reach the end of our emotional rope. At that point, we must make new deposits in our spiritual bank-account or we are doomed to slide into a bankruptcy of the soul.

A good source of new emotional riches is the Bible, and one part of the Bible which is particularly rich in ideas is the Book of Psalms. These communiques between the soul and the Creator of all souls, Almighty God, can be most rewarding to us.

For example, the short Psalm—Number 54. Its writer declares that his enemies are out to get him. They threaten him with violence and destruction. How can he cope with his adversaries? What can he do in his distress? The Psalmist copes with his problem by calling upon God. In one outburst he cries out: "Destroy my enemies with Thy truth!" One commentator has pointed out that the worst enemies we have to deal with are fear and anxiety. Apprehension has been described as fear in its infancy. Often we manufacture our own worries. And the Psalmist brings us close to one solution of our woe when he prays that God's truth will obliterate the enemy. If more of us were interested in God's truth, we would be less distraught. What is God's truth? God's truth is that all men are part of one family. God's truth is that we have resources inside of us which we seldom use.

God's truth is that our powers are often greater than we think when we get panicky or frightened, disturbed or perturbed. God's truth is that we are better equipped to overcome our anxieties than we imagine. God's truth is that if we were to focus on our gifts more than on our losses, we would often find the way to equanimity. In Psalm 54, the writer regains something of his ease and says: "With a freewill offering I will sacrifice unto Thee...I will give thanks unto Thy name, O Lord, for it is good."

The lady who overdrew her account probably found she had means of borrowing money to re-establish her credit. Probably she resolved later not to be such a spendthrift. Let us also resolve not to waste our resources, but to put to good use the abilities that God has granted us for a life of purpose and a life of meaning.

TWO WAYS TO DIE

Bettie M. Sellers

Dad died reaching for his reading glasses
(too vain to wear them all the time);
papers and specs scattered on the kitchen floor
beside Rags curled warm on the crackling hearth.
It had been a good day—hunting the swamp
for mallard and quail; feeding the bawling steers;
running to town for a salt block.
Not a bad time to die.

My mother stares with puzzled eyes
at her microcosmic world of white walls
and crib-rails...nurses moving in and out,
strange figures bringing food on trays;
and other strangers standing by the bed
saying: Good morning, mother.
Oh, my mother,
you've been dead too long already!

DAWNING-LIGHT

Monica Boyce

Send Thy dawning-light
    O God of Mind!
Banish sinful pride
    That I be not blind.

Let me image
    Image the divine;
Ready my heart;
    Give me a sign.

Turn my ways from self;
    Waken love in me;
Loosen from false
    Mortality.

Link me to Thee—
    That is the goal—
Consecrate, O Lord,
    My will control.

SUCCESSFUL SCHOLARS

Margaret O. Richardson

Nobody
who studies
the Holy Bible
    fails,
because
God fails
nobody.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Sara M. Seymour

ABOUT fifteen years ago, as director of a private social agency located in a deteriorated neighborhood, I became concerned over a group of boys between fourteen and sixteen years of age who were displaying signs of anti-social behavior and were interested in forming a gang. Many of their elder brothers belonged to gangs, and these lads felt it was the only way of gaining status and giving vent to their frustrations.

To counteract this, a group worker was assigned to them who urged them to form a social club, elect officers, meet on a regular basis, and set some goals. Frequently I dropped in on their meetings, and we had some lively discussion of problems in the neighborhood and how to cope with them.

One evening we had been alerted that there was considerable tension in the neighborhood and the possibility of street-fighting between rival gangs. Although not involved, our group was very edgy and easily could end up in trouble. We broke a rule and got a game of basketball going after normal closing hours. Then, after showers, we sat down with cokes and started talking about attending a major sports event and ways of raising the necessary funds. For the first time we felt we were making progress.

Several days after our meeting, I received a call from a local hospital asking if we knew a boy named Louie. We did. He was a member of our new club. Louie was in the hospital and very ill. His family had been contacted, but they did not know his friends. We promised to alert his friends to the possibility of contagion. We sent word we wanted to see all of the club members. Since we had built up trust and rapport, all of them reported except Louie. They kept their word and checked in every day.

At the next meeting of the club, we had been informed that Louie had meningitis. He was seriously ill and in a coma.

The next twenty-four hours would tell the story.

Up until this point, the boys had taken Louie's illness rather placidly, since he was considered a pest at times although he was so good-natured and anxious to be accepted that he was tolerated. Now, with this turn of events, attitudes changed. Louie's faults were forgotten. The boys demanded that something be done immediately. Many suggestions were made—that they rob a bank, storm the hospital to make the doctor cure Louie, kidnap him and take him home to his mother, among others. They finally realized how futile their ideas were. But something still had to be done.

I then told them I knew what I was going to do, but I needed help. In their excitement they jumped to their feet and cried, "Let me do it!"

I said, "You must all help me. Let's pray. The doctors, including specialists, have done everything they can. So now let's turn it over to God."

I shall never forget the amazed and stricken looks on their faces. After several moments of silence, bedlam broke loose with everyone talking and shouting with disdain. "What do you mean, pray, when you ain't in church?" "How do you do it?" "You're crazy! God doesn't listen to guys who ain't nothing!"

Again things calmed. I could have wept at their hopeless looks. I explained I knew they were wrong, I asked God for help always—I couldn't do my job if He didn't help me. I ended by saying, "So what do you have to lose? You said you wanted to help Louie. Never mind, I'll do it myself."

Johnnie, the natural leader of the group and now president of the club, stood up and said, "So, like you said—what have we got to lose? You show us, and everybody will do it."

Now I was gaining, for all obeyed Johnnie. With a silent call for help, I walked over to him and reached for his hand. He drew it back. And then as I waited with outstretched hand, he took a strong hold—and the lad to my left followed suit. As we stood in a circle, I explained that it was very simple, all they had to do was tell God under their breaths how they felt, that they wanted Louie to get better—the words didn't matter, just

be honest, and He would understand. I then bowed my head for several minutes. There was complete silence. Then the grip on my hand tightened, and I bade them goodnight with thanks for their help. I said I would be in early the next morning.

It was a very long night as I realized I had almost forced my belief on them and had never once said, "Thy will be done." Upon reaching the agency in the morning, I realized it was much too early to check the hospital, so I nervously paced, hoping one of the boys would show up. The phone rang, and the doctor in a weary but jubilant voice said, "A miracle has happened. Louie came out of the coma, and—it's unbelievable—but no paralysis and—we think—no brain-damage!"

A short time later, fifteen lads out of breath from racing the several blocks from the hospital, came into the agency smiling happily and said: "Guess what! Louie ain't going to die! The doc told us."

Then very solemnly Johnnie walked over and took my hand and said, "I want to tell you that that prayer racket of yours is pretty good. We won't ever forget."

I GIVE YOU A WORD *Erica May Brooks*

Fellowship is
Everlasting conscious solace.
Love lingers throughout eternally,
Letting all else go.
Onward the spirit struggles
Withstanding every condition of
circumstance.
Striving to salvage purpose.
Hope is the heartthrob of humanity
In each experience.
Prayer and prayer alone sustains
the soul.

ALL

A Story by Lucille Patterson

In a large seacoast city, it was the custom to run an excursion boat once a year to celebrate a holiday of the seas.

Tickets were sold at exorbitant prices. But to ride the boat was a matter of local pride. Since all of the people were going, naturally all of the people had to go. They rode or flew or walked to the point of embarkment. They stood on the docks and cheered as the steamboat chugged up the ocean inlet and clambered on board as if their very lives depended on it.

On the day of the ceremony, the skies were dark and angry clouds hung overhead. A bad storm was predicted, the wind was rising and the waters were restless. It was suggested by the holiday committee that the excursion be called off, but the ticket-sellers and ticket-holders would not hear of it. The people hurried even more down to the docks, in fact, and boarded the steamboat. They wanted to be on the boat ahead of the storm. There could be no danger since everybody was coming aboard. The storm could not possibly frighten such a great number of people. Certainly the holiday was bound to be a success.

A little old lady was caught up in the crowd going to the docks. Although she had bought no ticket, she could not convince anyone that she did not wish to board the excursion boat. As the crowd pushed and shoved, the old lady pleaded in vain to be allowed to go on her way. She was trying to get home to take down her wash before the storm broke. "My clothes will be ruined—my quilts will fade, the socks will blow away, I shall be ruined! I'm a poor woman. I cannot afford new clothes, how can I afford a ticket?"

No one paid any attention to the silly old woman. At first they pushed because they thought she walked too slow. Then they shoved past her for fear she might reach the dock ahead of them. Finally the crowd grew so dense that the people realized there would not be room for everybody on board. They asked the old

woman what deck her ticket was for. She said she had no ticket. No one believed her. They thought she was being coy and holding out on them. So some ruffians threw her down and tied her up. She kept begging them to be merciful. "A bad storm is coming up, and you'll all drown on that steamboat," she cried. The crowd thought she was a jealous old cat. "You can't scare us," they said. "If you don't shut up, we'll drown you ourselves. Right under the dock!"

The old lady was quite miserable and unhappy. She was sorely drenched by the rain that was falling. For it did storm, and the waves rose like a wet mountain and the winds roared right out to where the steamboat was carrying the revelers.

As a few observers gathered at the docks for news of the excursion, they spied the old lady there and freed her.Everyone felt sorry for her. "Were you robbed?" they asked.

"No." She shook her head. "I didn't have a ticket, anyway."

"For shame!" they said. "Were you caught trying to sneak a free ride? You have to pay your own way in this world. This excursion is not for charity!"

"I'm not asking for charity," the old woman said indignantly. "I did not go on any excursion or care to buy a ticket even if I had had the money, which I hadn't. Didn't you know a storm was coming, that people's lives were in danger out on those treacherous waters?"

"Advice, advice. . . always from those who are left behind, always from those who can least afford it. Go home, old lady, before you drown yourself in a puddle of tears. We'll attend to the steamboat."

Sadly enough, the steamboat was attended to. But not soon enough to save more than a few straggling survivors of the disaster. The boat sank with most of its human cargo.

For many years afterwards, people talked of the little old lady who had missed the boat.

For many years the old lady sought to break down the rumors and stories and versions of the tragedy. She had had no desire, no ticket, no money. . . also, no luck. The legend grew and

grew.

But the memory of that fateful holiday served as a reminder that nothing is safe simply because all of the people are doing it, nothing is right because all of the people want it that way. . . .

(Quotations in this issue courtesy of Miss Alice Richmond)

MAY WE

L. E. Tripp

Each day, do something that will bring
To someone that you know
The precious gift of happiness,
And watch it grow and grow.

Spread kindness in this world of ours;
Make every day a gem,
A jeweled pendant sparkling like
A golden diadem.

The hours God has given us
Are forms of wealth untold,
And may we have the Midas touch
To change them into gold.

May every day shine like a star
With hope and faith and love,
And may we make a better world
With guidance from above!

WITH OPEN EYES

Mary Graham Lund

The book my days are writing—
  How can I read it now?
So twisted are the letters,
  So faint the prints! Then how

Can I keep on writing,
  So flustered and so vain,
So jealous of my neighbors,
  My heart so pierced by pain?

Perhaps a prayer will open
  My eyes that I may see
More clearly what I'm writing?
  I pray that it may be.

PROBLEM

Wally Kennicutt

I don't want to give up
all that You demand,
Lord;
all my petty sins of
worry
greed
envy
and bitterness—
all my cares and frustrations—
yet You replace them
with peace.

NOTICES & COMMENT

THE PASSING OF A GREAT MAN. We were saddened to learn of the death of the Reverend Eugene McKinley Pierce on July 27. He had been an associate pastor of Marble Collegiate Church in New York City for the past twenty-five years, having celebrated this anniversary—on June 3—along with his fiftieth wedding anniversary. Reverend Pierce was a devoted pastor and a true servant of God. He was most helpful to the Executive Secretary on numerous occasions. Along with Mrs. Pierce, he attended and participated in the Twentieth Anniversary of Fellowship in Prayer in June, 1970. He will be greatly missed. The sympathy of the Fellowship is extended to Mrs. Pierce and her daughters.

COURSE IN PRAYER. Lesson 2 of Fellowship in Prayer's new Course in Prayer, by Francis Merchant, has been mailed to all members. Lesson 3 will be mailed in November.

ERRATUM. On page 33 of the August issue, the poem entitled *Communion* was credited to Kelly Janes. It was actually written by R. D. MacKenzie. We regret this error.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. The subscription rate is three dollars a year; four dollars for foreign countries (due to higher postage rates). Back issues are available at thirty-five cents per copy. All contributions to the work are tax-deductible.

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EDITORIAL (Continued from page 2)

covered from them.

No matter. They separate us from others—whether by the shallowness I have mentioned, which can appear so insulting to what is really real, or by the grossest drunkenness, the ego blown up to the point of paranoia or worry to the point of true insanity. It is odd that these sufferings, which often begin with feeling "out of it," often end by carrying us out of it forever.

I believe that every human being except the unfortunate is almost always aware of what is real and what is not. We know a great deal more than we let on to ourselves, especially if we are looking for a way-out. What we seem to long for is to be a part of what we know is real. We fail to do this—and so suffer —when we are ignorant or when we lack the minute-by-minute honesty and courage to live in reality, God's very concrete creation that we call life. —P.G.

LYRIC from 'TO PLACATE THE EARTH'S SPIRIT'

Rafael de las Casas

Is it silence, that whole sunsets
come apart
in my eye; what dyssymmetric
hand in huge
chromatic miracles harvests such
splendor. .

Is it silence, that in slender
sherpas guides
the sparkling canticles of stars
to their lonely graves, or
plucks
the willow's praxis leaf, or
hives the marsh bee's
soft reliquary swarm?

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A PSALM OF THANKS FOR CHILDREN

Emma S. McLaughlin

We offer thanks for children:

For the clear, farseeing candor of their eyes and the untarnished beauty of their souls;

For the magic of them, poised tiptoe on the edge of every moment, reaching for stars and searching the roadway for diamonds;

For the abundant joy of them, music of merry voices like bright water that bubbles from the cooling wayside springs — and laughter, mounting up on golden wings like windblown butterflies;

For the trust of them, building their castles at the water's edge with never a thought for the rising of the tide, and looking to us for the hand outstretched to comfort, for the expected benison of love;

For the curiosity of them, that seeks to know the how and why of things, eternally questioning;

For the honesty of them, that penetrates the core of our defenses and tears away our poor, concealing masks.

For the forgiveness of them, that bears no grudge beyond the passing moment, their anger spent as quickly as summer showers.

Lord, give us the simplicity of children and make us worthy of the Kingdom of God.

Are you sure you're all paid up on your subscription to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER?

If you are, you are going to receive a Christmas present from us---

Rabbi Samuel Silver's

WHEN YOU SPEAK ENGLISH, YOU'RE OFTEN TALKING HEBREW

We are sure that everybody will want to have a copy of this new book by Rabbi Silver, one of our Contributing Editors, whose writings about the Jewish faith have been among the most popular we have ever printed. This new book of his, especially printed by the Fellowship, keeps up his high standard of fascinating information explained with delightful wit.

If you are not paid up, hurry to send us your check so that your name will be on the mailing-list when we send this book out to members in December at the same time that we send out the regular issue of the bimonthly.